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OUR CHALYBEATE WELL.

As there is a probability, or, as some say, even a certainty, that Buttercombe Parva will almost immediately take rank among the great Watering-places of England, it is as well that some account should be given of that fount of its greatness, its Miraculous Well, before the thousand footsteps of Fashion shall have trodden out the traces of old romance about its brink; which happened, as we all know, to the baths of Prince Bladud, whose memory was quite forgotten, until rescued by Mr Pickwick, in the more modern splendours of the court of King Nash. We hasten to write of Buttercombe Parva, then, as it still is—holding ourselves irresponsible for any change of cloud-topped pinnacle or gorgeous dome it may undergo while these few pages are passing through the press—with its Pump, but without its Pump-room; with its village Inn, but without its Royal Victoria Hotel for All Nations; with its shops for the sale of miscellaneous articles, but without its *Emporia*; with the donkeys luxuriating on its common land, but without those scarlet trappings and Liliputian panniers which proclaim their dedication to visitors; with the fine open space in its centre, adapted, indeed, for the erection of anything, but without that equestrian statue of Farmer Kennun (in brass) who discovered Buttercombe Well.

Early, however, as we had taken the field—we don't mean the field where the well is, for that is not to be had under a guinea the cubic foot—we found it a task by no means easy to find out for certain who *did* first discover it. Many benefactors of their species have had a delicacy about declaring themselves to a grateful public—we don't know who wrote the old Scotch ballads, and no man can lay his hand upon the original inventor of sherry-cobbler—and it may be that Farmer Kennun's modesty, which has blushed hitherto unseen through a protracted existence, may have waited for this opportunity to exhibit itself; but certain it is he never confessed to having found out the virtues of this wonderful well in the first instance. On the contrary, we have heard him, with much admiration, assign this honour, on several different occasions, to as many different individuals.

Dame Durden, for instance, had discovered it years ago, and had got entirely cured of her paralysis by its miraculous qualities; only, with the selfishness peculiar to extreme old age, she had kept the secret to herself, and only revealed it upon what she had every reason to believe was her death-bed.

Gaffer Grey, too, who had been lame for a score of years, had happened, on one occasion, to tumble into

the well—a circumstance which, to those who were acquainted with that venerable rustic, did not enhance the immediate value of the water as an article of consumption—and had walked straight ever afterwards to the end of his life.

But, upon inquiry being strictly made, all that was corroborated concerning Dame Durden was, that she had used the well, because it happened to be handy, for culinary purposes; had drunk its water when she could get nothing better to drink; and on some few occasions had washed herself in it—but this last allegation was doubted by those who knew her best. She had had a stiffness of the arm, which sometimes was better, and sometimes was worse; and it was certainly worse in winter, when she didn't much use the water, than in summer, when she did. With regard to the well being of a chalybeate character, Dame Durden observed, that 'she had never heard nothink of that; no, nothink agen the well at all, from nobody.'

The case of Mr Grey would hold even still less water (and of water of a miraculous character, absolutely none at all). It was true that he had not been seen to walk straight for a period of twenty years; but that was not so much through constitutional lameness as through constitutional attachment to drink. It was true that he had strayed, upon one occasion, into the field which contained this treasure of a well, and had managed to tumble into it; but it was no less a fact that he had been taken out thoroughly sobered, to his bed, whereon he died, in a fortnight afterwards, of the rheumatics.

All those to whom Farmer Kennun had attributed the first discovery of the virtues of Our Chalybeate Well being eliminated by similar investigation, we could not but come to the conclusion that the honour was due, after all, to Farmer Kennun himself, to whom, by a singular coincidence, the field in question also happened to belong.

This fact becoming at last incontrovertibly established, that gentleman accepted his position, and is now the recognised founder of Buttercombe Spa. It was vouchsafed to him, and to him alone, to hear 'strange explosions,' when at a short distance from our (and his) miraculous well; the which, in his intelligent perception of chemical phenomena, he attributes to 'the escape of the gas.' Certain it is, indeed, that the gas, or whatever else is the peculiar property of Our Well, has a curious predilection for escaping from it and then returning to it again, quite unexpectedly, and sometimes in a wholly different form. Of three bottles full of it, selected at short intervals, and carried off with our own hands for analytical investigation, No. 1 was found to contain

as good and tasteless water as a Christian needs to drink; No. 2 had iodine in it; and No. 3 was very strongly impregnated with Epsom salts. Now, these very striking natural characteristics—however singular and interesting they may be, and are, in a scientific point of view—appear to us to militate strongly against the value of Our Well as a medicinal agent. There is no knowing what changes may be in preparation in that wonderful spring, nor what are the laws which govern their periodical occurrences. Some noble lord who visits Buttercombe Parva Spa for gout, may, for all we can tell, get a draught of cod-liver oil some morning; or his lady, with a pulmonary complaint, may, on the other hand, toss off a glass of colchicum. We should scarcely be surprised if a quantity of some patent medicine even should be thrown up during one of these throes of nature, to which, like the Icelandic geysers, Our Well appears to be subject, and to find its Protean surface covered with floating boxes of Holloway's Pills.

Our Chalybeate Well has, we believe it is confessed on all hands, no iron in it whatever—but that, of course, only increases its singularity. What its advocates mainly rely upon (and we must allow that there is now no little truth in their assertion) is, that the water that comes out of it ‘has a very nasty taste.’ This, and the fact that the rector of the parish has been heard to say that it ‘did him good,’ are the foundations upon which the fame of Buttercombe Parva is about to be built. Small beginnings, indeed; but how interesting will it be in time to come to be able to trace the origin of our gigantic and palatial city down to them! We dare say Cheltenham herself had nothing better to boast of at one time; it is possible that the savage tribes who formerly inhabited Bath may have considered its bubbling springs very filthy drinking; the Abbot of Leamington may have once inadvertently remarked that its water—mixed perhaps in a little sack—had ‘done him good.’ It is both strange and rare to read of the infancy of something that is fated to be great, before the greatness happens to it; biographies of that sort being almost without exception retrospective. Buttercombe Parva is, as we have already written, as yet a mere village. Farmer Kennun’s field is still frequented by kine only, principally of a brown colour—doubtless in consequence of the ferruginous—But, no; we were forgetting the peculiar idiosyncrasy of Our Chalybeate Well. The whole space, consisting of several acres, is divided, however—upon a very accurate red and blue ‘plan’ at least—into spacious public edifices. The News-room, where the people of fashion will retire after bathing, and where coffee will be procurable, is to be on the left-hand side of the gate as you enter, where the dung-heap now stands. The Assembly Hall, comprehending a Pump-room, Hot and Cold Bath-rooms, and a Ball-room with a small adjoining Apartment expressly adapted for whist-players, is of course to surround the miraculous spring. An ecclesiastical establishment—it has been expressly stipulated by the rector—is to be erected opposite to the News-room, and Farmer Kennun (quite unknown to the rector) is said to have already fixed his eye upon a fashionable preacher of Evangelical principles and tried Watering-place attractions. The capabilities of Buttercombe Parva in the way of accommodation are at present rather confined—when we have mentioned the bay-window over the butcher’s shop, and the second room in the turnpike toll-house, indeed, we come to the end of them—but, in design, they are absolutely without limit. Kennun Crescent, consisting of two hundred and forty mansions (the three centre ones with pilasters, and considerably larger than the rest), is to have a western aspect, towards Buttercombe Regis. Kennun Terrace, with its back

to this palatial pile, and intended less for titled persons than for the richer sort of landed gentry, will command an uninterrupted view (save for a few isolated houses to be called Kennun Villas) of the parish workhouse. The principal street, with its magnificent commercial establishments, will, it is rumoured, in return for his valuable corroboration of the virtues of Our Chalybeate Well, be named after our rector. Durden Square will immortalise, as far as bricks and mortar and the best Portland stone can do it, the memory of her whose deep obligation to its waters has been already described; and similarly, Gaffer Grey Parade is the area fixed upon for the two brass bands—one native, and the other German—to play on alternate afternoons to the distinguished visitors. ‘There,’ says the prospectus, at present in Mr Kennun’s desk, receiving its finishing-touches from his imaginative pen, but shortly to be circulated in print through the length and breadth (as he has been heard to say himself) of the New and the Old Worlds—‘There will the soothing strains of the latest music charm away what lingering remnants of disease the healing waters of Our Chalybeate Well may have failed to eliminate. There will Rheumatism forget its pangs, and Consumption omit its but too customary cough. Age—titled Age—will there renew its youth in the contemplation of the young and the lovely; and the domestic affections be evoked by the spectacle of perambulators full of the most high-born children.’

We decline, from motives of delicacy, as well as on account of the laws relating to copyright, to quote further; and merely remark, that the whole document is conceived in the same lofty style of glowing eloquence. We believe, although we have no authority to make the offer, that if any needy nobleman in want of a couple of thousand pounds, would come down at once to Our Chalybeate Well and be cured of any physical malady, that the money would not be wanting to rest him in other respects. The quarter of that sum might be paid perhaps even for a *bond-fide* admission—to be publicly made use of—that it did his Lordship good. But he had better make haste about it, for ‘the Season’ of Buttercombe Parva Spa is positively to commence next spring.

In the meantime, a beginning—humble enough, it is true, but still a beginning—has been made. A subscription list for building purposes is at this moment going the round of the parish, headed with quite a munificent sum by Farmer Kennun. There are certain miserable detractors who hint that such generosity is not altogether unreasonable, since the commencement will be made upon his land. A diminutive pony is also already conveying over the district, in a peculiarly shaped cart, the water from Our Chalybeate Well *for sale*. The rector buys two gallons *per diem* of it; as Mr Kennun asserts, for his private drinking, but as the aforesaid detractors contend, for manuring his asparagus bed.

Thus far, then, things have progressed at present towards making Buttercombe Parva famous, and in glorification of Our Chalybeate Well. But as impartial chroniclers, we feel it right, before concluding our narration, to give Mrs Deborah Giles’s account of the matter, who has lived in the parish rather over eighty years, and is therefore entitled to be heard upon all local topics.

She is a little hard of hearing—hard of conviction, and even ‘obstinate as a mule,’ says Farmer Kennun—and perhaps inclined to cling to ancient legend rather than to modern chemical discoveries; but she has her senses about her nevertheless, and when she entertains an opinion, has no sort of hesitation in delivering it. The following are Mrs Deborah Giles’s very own words.

‘Killibit Well,’ says she, ‘d’wont tell I nothink about your Killibit Wells, for it’s all a pack of

nonsense. A nasty taste has it? Ah! it's loikely to be nasty; d'wont I know? Tinker's jackass was a coming whoam, years ago, with a load of salt, and dropped down dead there; that eh did; and they buried him, salt and all, in Kennun's Well. Nasty! Why, o'course it's nasty; well it may be. Jackass and salt be at the bottom o' it. That's why.'

And that, according to its oldest inhabitant, is how we make Chalybeate Wells at Buttercombe Parva.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

It is always a pity when people don't call things by their right names. There is no more fruitful source of confusion and failure; and we suspect that the misnomer of styling a certain class of mutual assurance companies 'friendly societies,' has had not a little to do with the precarious and consumptive existence of a great many of those useful institutions. It has given rise to a great deal of ambiguity and misapprehension as to their real objects and mode of working, and has prevented their affairs being administered with that close adherence to scientific principles which can alone preserve them in a sound and flourishing condition. So far as the great majority of these societies are concerned, there is, strictly speaking, nothing 'friendly' about them at all, except a very proper and natural friendliness for the cherished individual vulgarly known as 'Number One,' and a strong desire to promote the welfare of himself and family. The society, as a body, stands to the individual members simply in the relation of a tradesman to his customers. The tradesman sells beef, or bread, or beer; the society sells a provision for casualties affecting its members. In either case, the customer pays for what he wants, and there is, properly speaking, nothing more friendly or benevolent in the one case than in the other. The man who joins a 'friendly society' engages in a simple business transaction; he makes a stipulated periodical payment to the society, and the society, in return, undertakes to give him a certain weekly allowance, should he fall sick and be unable to do his work, and to pay down a certain sum to his family when he dies. Joe Muggins, when he begins paying his 2s. a month, or whatever it may be, does not know how many days he will be ill out of the years he has got to live, or how many those years will be. He knows there will be a certain aggregate amount of sickness and death over the society as a whole, but he cannot tell how it may be distributed; some members will have more, others less, than their average proportion. By joining the society, they throw their luck into a mass, and then redistribute it so as to do away, to some extent, with the disproportion which previously existed. Muggins just throws his luck in with the rest. If it turn out bad, if he get an ugly fall, or catch a fever, or find that hacking cough prove too much for him, then the others help him to bear the distress which might otherwise have overwhelmed him. If it turn out good, then he takes his part in doing the same kind office for others.

Of course, if he has been blessed with particularly good health, there will be no return for his money during his lifetime, except that ease of mind and freedom from anxiety which he derives from the knowledge that he has provided against hard times, should they befall him, and which may have had not a little to do with the strength and activity he has enjoyed. This release from care, partial as it is, is worth the money. The vigour and longevity of annuitants are proverbial. With the enjoyment of the fruits of their investment they often seem to enter on a new lease of life; and we find, indeed, that the members of these mutual assurance societies do actually enjoy a higher life-rate not only than the

population as a whole, but even than the middle and upper classes of society.* But our friend Muggins, and the others, who happen to have been in luck, and to have escaped accidents and sickness more than some of their neighbours, have no right to consider themselves peculiarly charitable and benevolent characters, because their unfortunate brother-members profit by their contributions, while they themselves, being in no want, get nothing. The sick man claims his allowance not as a charity, but as a right. He only gets what he has paid for, and there is no obligation on one side or the other: hence the bargain should be based as rigidly and unswervingly upon the principles of profit and loss as any other business transaction, allowance of course being made for the fact, that the society has no profit to make beyond what is required to meet its expenses. All this seems plain enough, and hardly worth while explaining; yet what with the crude notions of the men who have the working of many of these institutions, and the mummery and sentiment with which many of them are associated, their real and legitimate character has been too frequently lost sight of, and ruin has been the result.

Mutual assurance societies appear to be of very ancient origin. The old Greeks were in the habit of contributing to a common chest for the relief of those who experienced adverse fortune; the Romans had a sort of burial-club, which allowed about L.3 for funeral expenses, in consideration of 15s. and a jar of wine on entrance, and a monthly subscription of 2d.; and the old guilds of the Anglo-Saxons partook very much of the character of what are now known as friendly societies. A proof, however, that until of late years they were not based on sound principles, is to be found in the fact, that none of those now in existence can be traced very far back. Daniel Defoe, in his *Essay on Projects*, recommended, as quite a novelty, the formation of societies 'by mutual assurance, for the relief of members in seasons of distress,' and a number were in operation some ten or twelve years later. In 1793, they received the sanction of parliament; but although some societies claim to have been born about the beginning of the 18th century, they have no proof to shew of it; and the probability is, that most of those now surviving are of much later date. In 1802, only 9672 members were returned as belonging to such societies; in 1815, they were enumerated at 925,429; while at present, the number of societies enrolled and certified in England and Wales is stated at 20,000, with funds exceeding L.9,000,000. The whole number of members connected with societies enrolled and unenrolled has been calculated at about 3,052,000, with an accumulated capital of L.11,360,000, and an annual revenue of L.4,980,000!† More than 10 per cent. of the societies, according to Mr. Tidd Pratt, the English registrar, have safely passed the maximum point—thirty-two years—and are now firmly established; but the same authority also reveals the distressing fact, that from the passing of the first act in 1793 to the end of 1858, out of 28,550 societies enrolled and certified, no fewer than 6850 have perished, notice of dissolution from 58 societies having been received during 1858 alone. Nor is this the worst, for it is beyond a doubt that a considerable number of societies still going on, and no doubt enrolling new members, or fresh victims, as they may be more appropriately

* This is no doubt partly because their connection with such an institution necessitates, as Mr. Neison remarks, 'a certain amount of frugality and industrial habit, sufficient to separate them from those reckless and improvident persons who are more openly exposed to the vicissitudes of poverty, distress, destitution, and disease, incidental to fluctuations in the demand for labour'; but it is due also, in no small measure, to the ease of mind which they secure, and which is one of the best preservatives against sickness. At anyrate, the fact is worth noting.

† Lord Beaumont's Speech in the House of Lords, 1850.

termed, are rotten to the core, and sure to go down with a crash some fine morning before long. Out of 4000 societies whose affairs were examined by Mr Ansell the actuary, *not one* was in a perfectly sound financial position!

Now, when we think of the thousands and thousands of decent industrious working-people who have placed their hardly earned savings in these institutions, and rely on them to keep them off the parish in sickness and old age, this state of things is alarming enough. The failure of one of these societies involves a greater amount of misery and distress than the failure even of a great bank, where ever so many hundred times as much money is concerned; for in the one case the persons affected are mostly those who don't keep all their eggs in one basket, but have another store to fall back on, should the first be lost to them, whereas in the other, the poor folk are ruined out and out; what they lose is little, but it is their all. No one with the slightest feeling of humanity could contemplate such a result without doing all he could to avert it. But apart altogether from higher motives, on the lowest ground of selfishness, the middle and upper classes are seriously interested in the fate of these societies. Mr Tidd Pratt estimates the saving to the poor-rates, from the action of the friendly societies, at no less than two millions a year. Another reliable authority, Mr Hardwick of Manchester,* has ascertained that, 'when labour is moderately plentiful, from 70 to 80 per cent. of the applications for relief in our large towns arises from sickness, death, or disability of some kind or other;' and it came out in evidence before the Parliamentary Committee of 1849, that out of 120 inmates of the Birmingham workhouse, excluding the young able-bodied labourers, 60 had belonged to clubs which had broken up. Out of 16 bedridden paupers, who had belonged to societies of one kind or another, 13 received no benefits, because the funds of their respective clubs were exhausted; while out of 29 paupers in the Alresford and Winchester Union Workhouse, 20 had belonged to defunct societies. The economy of promoting these associations on a sound basis, and preserving them in health and vigour, is therefore unquestionable.

Of course, in the infancy of the mutual assurance movement, the founders of societies had neither statistics nor experience to guide them, and consequently their tables were made up after a very 'happy-go-lucky' fashion. Each society tried to gain adherents by offering the largest return for the smallest investment. The contributions were absurdly low—the allowances and annuities absurdly high; and the result was, in nearly every case, that all the funds were spent in the sick allowances, and when the superannuation claims began to come in, there was nothing in the purse to meet them, and bankruptcy became inevitable. Now, however, the government returns of sickness and mortality, and the experience of the societies themselves, afford a tolerably reliable clue to the calculations on which the subscriptions and returns should be based, and every year is adding to our stock of knowledge, and establishing more precise and accurate rules. If the aggregate of cases be only large enough, the chances of ill health and death may be calculated with an approximation to certainty quite sufficient for all practical purposes. It is now, we believe, generally accepted as a rule, that at the age of 20, the average sickness of the members of a friendly society is between 8 and 9 tenths of a week per year; at 40, about 1 week and 1-tenth; at 60, about 3 weeks and

7-tenths; and at 70, about 13 weeks. Then, as to the expectation of life, the average at 20 years may be stated at about 42½ years; and at 40, about 27½. So that the amount of money to be got out of each member, and the liability of expenditure, in the shape of sick, superannuation, and death allowances, may be reckoned pretty closely. Mr Tidd Pratt calculates that for 2s. month, beginning at the age of 23, or 2s. 8d. at the age of 40, a weekly allowance of L.1 in sickness may be secured, to males, the monthly contribution and benefit ceasing at 60 years of age; while L.20 at death may be contracted for by monthly payments of 7d., beginning at the age of 20; 10d. at 30; and 1s. 1d. at 40. According to a table compiled by Mr Ratcliffe, from the experience of the Manchester Unity of Odd Fellows, a sick allowance of 10s. a week, to be continued till 70 years of age, an annuity of L.6, 10s. after that period (contributions for both ceasing at 70 years of age), and the sum of L.10 at death, may be obtained by a monthly payment of a fraction more than 1s. 8d., beginning at the age of 20; 2s. 4d. at 30; and 3s. 5d. at 40.

The chief causes of the disease which is fast sapping the vitality of many of the friendly societies, are the insufficiency both of members and rates of contribution; the absence of graduated rates for different ages; and the costly mummeries with which many of them are bound up. Before such an institution can be safely worked, there must necessarily be a wide field of membership over which the joint-liability may extend, so that the excess of misfortune in a certain number of cases may not bear too severely on the remainder, who have to provide compensation. Then, of course, it is clear that if the concern is to be self-supporting, the rates of contribution must be strictly regulated by the average liability, and not by benevolent impulse or capricious guess-work; and it is also equally clear that it is a gross and manifest injustice to charge a man, entering at 20 years of age, the same prices as a man who does not enter till 40 or 60, and who brings with him an infinitely higher amount of liability, both as regards sickness and death. Yet a great many, if not the majority of friendly societies, charge them the same fees, irrespective of age, thus swindling the young members for the sake of the older ones, and holding out a premium to men to delay joining as long as possible. From the young man they get the benefit of all his payments over a long series of years, and only a slight liability; while the old man has only a few years to contribute in, and brings a heavy and immediate liability with him.

Another serious evil is the expensive 'mummeries'—for they deserve no other name—which form an element in various very extensive societies, such as the Foresters, Druids, and others. Whatever use they may have had at one time as baits to induce people to join, the working-men of our day are too sensible and intelligent to require such attractions, and ought not to have their money squandered on such follies. The following letter from certain Foresters, to Mr T. Pratt, forcibly illustrates their pernicious working:

'We are members of Court —, No. —, of the Ancient Order of Foresters' Friendly Society, held at the —, in the county of —. Our anniversary will take place in June: the scarf, and horn, and ribbon, will cost, at a low rate, 8s.; dinner and band, 4s.; day's work, 2s. 6d.—total, 14s. 6d.; and if we do not attend the anniversary, the committee say we will inflict a fine of 2s. 6d., which is a heavy fine on us that have got families to keep.'

The meeting of societies in public-houses is another thing fraught with danger. In many cases, perhaps, they do no harm, but the last report of the registrar shews the evil of the system. In one club, where the

* To whom we are indebted for several of the facts mentioned in this paper, and to whose *Manual for Friendly Societies* (London, Routledge) we would refer any who wish to study the subject at length, as one of the most complete and practical works on this important question.

annual contribution is 15s., some 6s. goes in drink besides; and in the Soberton Friendly Society, Southamptonshire, no less than 258 gallons of beer were consumed by 120 members during the last three years. These facts require no comment. Another objection to the meetings being held at such places is, that in small towns, or populous villages, each publican tries to get up one, and the effect is to split up what would have made one sound, healthy association, into a number of sickly ones, which soon fall to pieces. Other causes of failure are improper investment of the funds, want of a regular audit of accounts, and premature division of the funds.

These are a few of the leading features of this important movement; and we trust ere long some means will be found of separating the sound from the unsound societies, so that the one may be fostered and encouraged, while the others are put a stop to at once, if irretrievably diseased, so that they may do no more harm, or re-established on correct principles, if there is any hope of cure.

MY GODMOTHER'S STORY.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

My godmother was always fussy when expecting a friend. Her old-fashioned hospitality would not delegate to servants finishing-touches and minute arrangements bearing upon the pleasure or convenience of guests whom she delighted to honour; but even I, who knew her ways, had never seen her so restlessly bent upon any one's comfort as that of the Miss Moore she was expecting that fine July afternoon when she told me the story I am going to tell. I don't know that I was a particularly worldly girl; but certainly the fact of Miss Moore being a music-teacher in a Bath school seemed to me a little out of keeping with such elaborate preparations; and when she arrived, her appearance impressed me as little as her position. Very slight and faded, quiet, and rather cold, her presence, I feared, would be nothing but a weight and a chill during the remainder of my visit; and when she retired for the two hours' rest before dinner which my godmother looked upon as essential after any railway journey, long or short, I could not forbear asking her, with some degree of petulance, what in the world there could be in or about Miss Moore to create the interest she had shewn. It was then, and in reply to my questions, that she told me the following story.

When I lost my poor dear husband nearly one-and-twenty years ago, I chose for my widowed home a pretty little cottage in the neighbourhood of Eldersley. The country was beautiful, and the cottage secluded—two great recommendations to me at that time. I did not want society, and was not likely to be troubled with it there, for the large proprietors around would hardly discover whether my small abode was tenanted or not. The only one of them who called upon me was Mr Moore of Acton Hall, with his only daughter. He had known my husband in early days, and seemed anxious to pay all friendly attention to his widow. I had often heard my husband speak of Charles Moore as a warm-hearted and generous, but weak-minded fellow. I hardly know that he ever said so in so many words, but the impression I received was that he had rather liked than respected him. Tall and graceful, there was yet something strikingly irresolute about every movement. The forehead was white as ivory, but it sloped backwards, and the full hazel eye met yours but for a moment, and then glanced restlessly away. But he was pleasant, kind, and much easier to get on with at first than his daughter, who was then a

girl of about twenty. I took it for granted that she must be like her mother, who had died many years before, for she was singularly unlike her father—tall and slight in figure as he was, but with a very contrasting air of decision in all she said or did. Her father seemed wrapped up in her, and I liked the tenderness of her manner to him, though it was protecting rather than filial, like the manner of an elder sister. More than once she broke in upon an unfinished sentence of his, deciding some question which he was discussing, or giving a positive opinion where he was merely suggesting and qualifying. Before they left, they made me promise that I would soon spend a long-day with them at Acton; and when their carriage rolled away, I found myself thinking more about them than I had for some time thought about anything but my own sorrows.

When the appointed day for my visit came, Miss Moore drove over for me by herself. I was a little sorry, expecting to find conversation flag, and wishing for Mr Moore and his placid generalities to fill up the time; but long before we got to the end of our drive, all sense of restraint was gone. Miss Moore seemed to enjoy the excitement of driving her pretty spirited ponies, and the bright sunshine and rapid motion revived my spirits too. I liked her frank protecting manner; I liked to watch the energy that pervaded her whole frame, the firm little hand that gathered in the reins, the steadfast eye, the ring of the clear voice. Though a coward in a carriage generally, I felt safe with her. As we neared the house, I saw that part of it was unfinished. 'Yes,' said she, 'that's dear papa's present hobby—the new hall; necessitated by the last hobby—the new drawing-room. The old hall was once too large for the rest of the house, and he has since contrived to make the rest of the house too large for the hall. I'm sorry for it, for papa is not a rich man, and I often fear he is hampering himself seriously.' Rather startled by this unexpected frankness, I made no reply, and we drove on in silence till we reached the temporary entrance, where we were met by Mr Moore and a fashionable-looking young man, whom he introduced to me as Captain Cameron. I could not help remarking the change in Miss Moore's manner. Evidently Captain Cameron's visit was to her an event of no ordinary interest. When she had taken off her bonnet for luncheon, she hardly looked like the same person. It was not only the improvement in appearance, for the bonnet hid the small well-set head and rich hair, but the difference in voice and manner. All abruptness and self-possession were gone, and her colour came and went like a timid child's. His admiration was as evident as her embarrassment, but I felt the pleasure of my day was a good deal spoiled; for even when, after luncheon, the young officer rode away to Eldersley, where he was quartered, Miss Moore continued silent and absent, and left me to be entertained by her father, who took me to see the improvements he was making, and those he had made in former years.

It seemed that before his time Acton had been a rambling old house, without much pretence to architectural beauty; but he had raised the roof, thrown out a wing, and was now constructing a noble hall. It struck me as we walked through the grounds that he was making the house too stately in proportion to their extent, which was not considerable, nor had they much old timber to boast of. Evidently, a great many of the best trees had been recently cut down. The chief charm of the place was the noble river, which swept rapidly round the bank on which the house stood. The gardens and green-houses were not in first-rate order, and Mr Moore rallied his daughter a good deal about the ill success of her administration, for it seemed she had been replacing

a head-gardener by some young protégé of her own. 'This naughty papa,' she said, turning to me, 'laughs at my economics, but I know that great greedy hall of his wants them all.' Mr Moore looked pained. 'The hall was essential, Margaret. We had no good billiard-room; the elevation was mean; the length of building disproportioned.' Playfully she put her little hand on his mouth. 'Yes, yes; but this is the very last of our building-schemes. I suppose it will be finished some day or other; then we'll shut up the house, go to Switzerland, and get rich.' Her father sighed as he put his arm round her waist, and turned the subject.

From this day I may, I think, date my friendship for Miss Moore. I was won by her frankness and her energy; and she took to me, as girls often will to women much older than themselves, and all the more because she knew I was lonely, and at that time poor. Her pretty ponies very frequently were kept pawing the gravel at my cottage-gate, while she ran in to insist upon carrying me off for a drive, or failing, would remain for a chat. Very frequently, too, I spent whole days at Acton, where Mr Moore had always a courteous welcome for me; indeed, both he and Margaret soon seemed to look upon me as a confidential friend, though, by the way, Mr Moore could never be called confiding. He had a singular way of always keeping back what he thought—what he meant to do. But he was sufficiently at his ease with me to be silent or to talk according to his own inclination. As for his daughter, she had few reserves from any one she loved; so I soon discovered the skeleton in this seemingly pleasant home. Mr Moore was living beyond his income, though to what extent she was unable to ascertain; but from his growing depression and reserve, she feared that he was becoming seriously involved. If she questioned, she roused an irritability of manner he had never shewn to her before, and this would be succeeded by a dejection that she dreaded far more. But Margaret had another counterbalancing anxiety, though she never named it to me. Captain Cameron was a frequent visitor; what brought him so often? Was his undisguised admiration of her society to be taken as signs of real feeling, or was he merely trifling with her? His manner perplexed me, and, it was plain to see, tortured Margaret. Sometimes he would ride over two or three times a week, and seem to worship the very ground she trod; then, again, days would pass without a call from him, and when he came at last, he would seem cold and constrained. As for her, it was piteous to see her on those days of vain watching and waiting. But she would struggle bravely, and I was careful not to betray that I observed her changing colour, or the icy coldness of her poor little trembling hands. Her father never failed to welcome Captain Cameron warmly, and to brighten up during his visits, whatever his previous mood. It was evident that his consent would be most readily given. But would it be asked? I kept considering and wondering about this thing, thinking sometimes that it inevitably would, and then, again, doubting whether the young officer might not intend merely to secure a pleasant year or two, and then, when his regiment was ordered off, to trench himself behind those playful professions of extreme poverty which he was so fond of making.

Meanwhile, the new hall got finished, and Mr Moore, probably, as we said to each other, from having no longer the excitement of watching its progress, grew more and more absent and gloomy. Margaret used to talk now very constantly about him and his affairs. Several small things occurred about this time to increase her alarm. The family lawyer, a formal, impenetrable sort of man,

for whom she had one of her vehement antipathies, was constantly driving over to Acton, and spending hours with Mr Moore, invariably leaving him more dejected than he found him. On one of these dark days, it so happened that the poor girl, whose allowance, it seemed, had not been regularly paid her for a year or two, was induced, by a pressing letter from her milliner, to enter her father's study, and ask for money to pay the enclosed bill. It was but a small one, but it threw Mr Moore into a state of distressing excitement. 'Girl, do you want to ruin me?' he had said. 'Curses on women and their vanity! why must you run up such bills as this just now?' And then, as she stood there petrified, for it seemed to her as though her father's mind were shaken, he looked at the trifling sum-total, seemed shocked at his own violence, tried to laugh it off, kissed her, told her the milliner should be paid the next day, and sent her back to me in tears. But that very evening Captain Cameron came over; and when Margaret returned from a stroll with him by the river's side, her eyes were bright and her step firm, as though the scene of the morning had never been. Some word or look of his had blown that cloud quite away! But it will be easily imagined that when, on the following morning, Mr Moore announced to us he was going to town for a week, I for one could not help feeling a sensation of relief. He, too, seemed more cheerful than usual, and kindly insisted that I should remain and keep his Maggie company. This was in the month of July, as I remember well, for the very day before Mr Moore's expected return, I was summoned to the death-bed of my husband's father, and did not get home till September.

The first morning after my arrival, I heard the rapid trot of the pretty ponies, and Margaret, running in, flung her arms round me in her warm-hearted way. 'You must come back with me, dear Mrs Malcolm; you must indeed. Papa wishes it; he must not be crossed.' And then, suddenly bursting into an agony of tears: 'I do not know what is the matter with papa; I fear—I fear,' lowering her voice to a whisper I guessed rather than heard, 'I think sometimes that papa is going mad.'

Of course I could not refuse to accompany her to Acton, and when I got there, we found Mr Moore so hospitable and seemingly cheerful, that Margaret's fears appeared to me quite unreasonable, though I was shocked at the look of illness on her father's face, and could not refrain from telling her that it was for his bodily health I should be inclined to tremble.

'Yes,' she said, 'he does look very ill. I think it is this new habit of his, this early bathing in the river.'

'Bathing! so late in the year?' For it was the second week in September, and the weather had a touch of frost about it. Margaret went on:

'Very soon after papa's return from town, he began to talk of bathing, as having been recommended to him by a London doctor. I wanted to go to the sea, but that he would not hear of. For the last month, he has bathed in the river every morning. He is a first-rate swimmer, and thought it would do him good to bathe with the current, which, you know, is very rapid just below the house. But I do not think it agrees with him. When he returns, his manner is strange and restless, and in the evenings, when wishing me good-night, he kisses me in such a wild way, and looks into my face so wistfully. Last night, as he held me long in his arms, I felt large tears drop on my hair, and heard him say: "She at least shall be happy. Come what may, she shall be happy." I wanted to speak, and tell him I knew there was some great trouble hanging over us, but that if he would only trust me, both might be happier, and that we would bear it bravely together. But I was so frightened, I

could not say one word. Hush! he is coming; let us look cheerful.'

'Mrs Malcolm, I challenge you to a stroll before dinner,' said Mr Moore. 'And my Maggie, too; I can't spare her this afternoon.'

We put on our bonnets, and went at once. His manner to his daughter was unspeakably tender, but it impressed me painfully; I scarcely knew why. It was strange and solemn, and sometimes, I thought, incoherent. I began to understand her fears. Coming home, the sunset fell yellow and cold upon the deep, swift river, and recalled to my mind his practice of early bathing.

'To-morrow morning will be decidedly frosty, Mr Moore,' said I; 'surely you will not be so imprudent as to bathe before the sun gets a little power. At six o'clock, it can hardly be light'—

'Six o'clock! Why, Biddy told me to-day that papa left his room a little after five, when it was quite dark, before any one but herself was up,' interrupted Margaret.

'Confound Biddy!' burst out Mr Moore; 'prying old fool! What does she do up at that hour? I will not have her set the house on fire, going about with her candle; pretending to brush, forsooth. It's your fault, Margaret; you've spoiled that old Irishwoman, till she has become insufferable. Tell her, once for all, that I will not have her get up before the others. I will not have it—I will not.'

'But, Mr Moore,' I persisted, anxious to divert him from the subject, Biddy being an especial favourite of mine, and not a little alarmed at such disproportionate vehemence about so mere a trifle—"but ought you to bathe? Is it good for you?"

'Perhaps not,' said he; 'perhaps I am carrying it a little too far. I had a touch of cramp this very morning. A mere touch, my Maggie; you need not look scared. The girl loves her poor father; would mourn for him, after all, I do believe.' And he looked at her with a strange yearning expression of love and woe, which seemed to frighten her, though she tried to laugh it off, saying she could not love a naughty papa who did not take care of his health, but bathed at unheard-of hours, and scolded good faithful Biddy. He tried to laugh too, but it was a sorrowful laugh.

The remainder of our walk was silent. Clouds gathered, yellow leaves fluttered thickly over our heads, and each knew that the other was sad. Margaret played the whole evening through, as, indeed, she often did. Her father held a book up before his face; but he did not turn the pages, and once, when I happened to change my seat, I caught that same loving, despairing look fixed upon his daughter, as she sat there at the instrument, her little hands sometimes flying over the keys, but oftener lingering over some sweet, sad strain with a passionate pathos I never heard equalled. I remarked that she kept playing Scotch airs, Captain Cameron's favourite ones, as if she cared for no others. Once her father asked her for one of Beethoven's adagios, of which he was very fond. She said she would look for it immediately; but she went on as if spell-bound, improvising wild, wailing variations, and then returning to dwell again on the simple melodies so dearly associated, till bedtime came.

'My Maggie,' said Mr Moore, 'my own child, you do not care for your poor father, and will not play one tune for him!'

'O papa, how thoughtless I have been. Let me play it now.'

'No, darling, it is too late. No; it is best as it is—best as it is. Give all the young heart to happiness, my own Maggie! God in heaven bless you, my child!' And he strained her to his heart with a convulsive energy which seemed to shock her, and confirmed my worst suspicions.

That night, as I sat up rather late in my own room,

there came a low tap at my door, and Biddy the Irish housemaid entered to my surprise with an air of profoundest mystery.

'I ask your pardon, ma'am; and is the young mistress goin' to be wid ye agin this night?'

'No, Biddy. Miss Moore seemed tired, and wished me good-night at the door of her own room.'

'Sure, thin, ma'am, I'll be after spakin' a word wid yourself this same blessed night; for may I never sin, but there's sorrow and heartbreak to the fore, and a pity it is for the sweet young mistress, the cratur, and she so young and illigant, glory be to God.'

'What is the matter, Biddy?' said I, not without a vague dread, the faithful Irishwoman was so weird-looking with her brown 'ribbed sea-sand' face, and her keen, wistful eyes set close together like those of a monkey.

'Faix, thin, ma'am, and it's myself does not know, barrin' that the master—and he as civil a gentleman as ever was—is gone clean out of his wits altogether!' And Biddy raised her hands above her head, swaying herself to and fro in her agitation.

'Why do you think so? What has happened? What do you mean?' I inquired.

'Sure, ma'am, and it's easy to see it by lookin' on his face, let alone his ways. They've been talkin' long enough in the hall, but I niver let on that I tuk any notice to any soul alive but yourself. Sure and he's taken all the plate out of James's keepin', till the poor boy has not a spone to spare, and daren't ask for another for his life; and jist this evening, when I was fixin' his dressing-room, and movin' some lump of a big parcel that he brought with him from London, if he didn't come in and rate at me till I was like to drop with the fear; he that used to be the decentest gentleman, says he'd have none of my pryin' ways; and what had I to do to be lookin' into that parcel; and no servant of his should leave their rooms till six o'clock, or he'd turn them off at an hour's notice; and that it was after settin' the house on fire I would be. Sure and he shook like an aspin, the cratur; and he's wasted, wasted, till he's no bigger than a good-sized turf. And what's to become of the swate young mistress with the trouble? O wurr, wurr!' And the warm-hearted creature threw her apron over her face and sobbed again. I comforted her as well as I could, but thought anxiously over her and my own impressions, and did not fall asleep till a late hour.

The next morning was bright and beautiful; but the pools in the gravel-walk shewed that there had been heavy rain in the night. Now the sun was shinng gaily, and the robin's brave little song came in with the perfume of the clematis as I opened the window. How foolish seemed Biddy's croakings and my own apprehensions of the night before!

When I went down, Margaret was sitting at the breakfast-table alone.

'Papa is later than usual this morning,' she said. 'I fancy he has lain down for a little nap after his early dip. We will begin breakfast; he does not like to have his movements noticed.'

Accordingly we began; and then the post-bag was brought in. It so happened that both Margaret and I had two or three letters that morning; and they occupied our attention long, so that when the French clock on the mantel-piece struck ten, we were startled to find how the time had passed.

Margaret sprang up. 'I must go and look after papa.'

A few minutes more, and then she returned pale as death.

'He is not in his room. I never knew him so late for breakfast before.'

'The morning is so fine, he has been tempted to

'take a long walk,' said I; but my own heart was beating fast.

'I shall go and meet him,' she said.

'Dear girl, you are hardly able to stand. And then, in what direction has Mr Moore gone? May he not have had an early cup of tea, and have taken a ride to Eldersley?'

She rang the bell. 'James, did you see my father this morning?'

The man looked anxious. 'No, ma'am; my master has gone out of late before any of us were up. I generally hear the hall-door shut when he comes back; I did not hear it this morning.'

While he was speaking, I caught sight of Biddy's face at the door—a very banhee of doom and horror, and understood from her rapid glance and gesture that she wished to speak to me alone.

'Margaret, my love,' I said, 'we will go together and meet Mr Moore. Nay, dear, not so—your shawl, your bonnet; he would be annoyed if he met us thus.' And I led her to her room.

Biddy was waiting for me in mine. 'It's all over,' she said; 'the master is drowned. Sure and I said there was heartbreak at hand. There's all his clothes in a heap on the river-bank. One of the boys on the farm came along that way and saw them, and tould the gardener, and myself met him like a madman running to see!'

'O Biddy, we must try and break it gently to Miss Moore—the shock will kill her. O perhaps, perhaps there is some mistake; I must go to her.'

Just then, Margaret came in, pale as marble, and her teeth chattering.

'I cannot wait,' she said; 'come with me at once—come.'

'Where shall we go, my darling?'

'To the river,' she gasped.

'O blessed Mother of God, she knows it then! sobbed poor Biddy.

With one sharp cry, Margaret leaped out of my arms and fell on the floor. I hoped that she had fainted, but hers was one of those strong natures to which such transient relief is seldom allowed. In a few moments she whispered as she lay and shivered there: 'The cramp, the cramp!' I was thankful for those words; for remembering Mr Moore's manner of the night before, a darker fear had crossed my own mind. A few minutes more and the poor girl had staggered to her feet.

'Where is he? I must see him.'

I told her all I knew. She insisted upon going to the river. How we reached it, I never knew. I said it had rained hard in the night, and the river that morning was very full—oh, very full, very black, very rapid! Once seized with cramp, the slight delicate man would be rolled along with the current, swept round that curve, borne within the reach of the tide, a few miles lower down, and carried out to sea. There were many now gathering round; they were pushing off a boat; they were talking of dragging the river. Margaret wanted to remain there, but I had her carried home. She could not stand, and her eyes were closed, but she was conscious; I knew that by her moaning.

The body was not found; with the river so swollen, it was hardly likely to be so. But day after day there was the search, the shuddering hope that it might not be in vain, or rather the terror either way. Captain Cameron rode over daily to inquire for Margaret. For more than a week, I never left her room, never, therefore, saw him; but when I did so, the agony of anxiety with which he wrung my hand while asking for her, gave me a firmer conviction of the reality of his attachment than all his previous assiduities had done. When ten days were passed and gone, the lawyer came over, a few distant

relatives came to the meeting, and the will was read. The estate was found to be mortgaged to its full value. The plate had almost all disappeared. There was a small sum in the bank, just enough to pay the servants their wages. All tradesmen, it would appear, had had their accounts settled soon after Mr Moore's return from London. During that last visit there, he had, it appeared, effected a policy of life assurance by which, at his death, £20,000 was secured to his daughter. Of her mother's fortune, which had been large, only two or three hundred remained. It was decided that the property should be sold as soon as possible. Margaret had several invitations to other and gayer friends, but she preferred coming to my little cottage. She asked me whether she might live with me, and I gladly agreed to the generous arrangements she proposed, feeling sure that it would soon be superseded by one happier for herself. Biddy would have broken her heart at leaving her young mistress, so we took her into our joint-service as housemaid.

It was many weeks before Margaret rallied at all from the fearful shock. Her strong nature was strong to suffer. I sometimes thought that she tortured herself needlessly. That last night, when she had left her father's favourite air unplayed, when she had almost shrunk from the intensity of his affection, haunted her unceasingly. She seemed to feel that it would be sinful to recover from so great a sorrow; and conscious how much dearer to her than the tenderest of fathers another had become, she tried to atone for this by banishing that other from her thoughts. For three or four months, I could not prevail upon her to see Captain Cameron, though he called constantly and looked so honestly unhappy that my heart ached for him. I could not for a moment doubt that he loved Margaret; and it seemed to me so natural that any one should love her, that I never even connected this fact with that of her fortune, till I heard some common-place remark of the kind from a gossiping neighbour. But, after all, it did of course make a great difference to the young officer, who, though a man of very good family, was poor, and had expensive habits. He was a fine open-hearted handsome fellow, less intellectual than my Margaret, but winning in looks and manner, and a great favourite in his regiment. One day I made an effort, and ventured to speak of him to her; reminded her how much her poor father had liked him; how warmly he used always to welcome him, how plainly I could read from the very first what was his heart's wish for his darling child.

Margaret made no answer, but she came and sat long at my feet, hiding her face in my hands. When she raised it, her dear eyes shone in the fire-light with something of their old brightness. When next Captain Cameron called, she did not run away. He was much moved when he saw her first in her deep mourning, so pale, so thin. The tears rolled down his face, and she was the calmer of the two. From that hour, I felt comforted about her. I knew that hope and happiness would revive, slowly, perhaps—for every feeling struck deep roots into her nature—but surely, for she was young and beloved. I could not resist hinting at my cheerful anticipations to Biddy, in whose discretion I had unbounded trust. But she received the hint with an ungracious grunt, which surprised me; for though I knew her to be an inveterate spinster—having heard her over and over again give thanks and glory that she 'niver, since she was as high as her hand, was one as cared to look after the boys'—I did think her affection for Miss Moore would have led her to rejoice in anything that promised her a return of happiness; and I told her so. 'Is it the dear young mistress's happiness,' said she, 'that Biddy Daly would be after thinking lightly of?

Troth, thin, and I'd work my hands to the bone to bring back the smile into her eyes, and small thanks to me for that same. But, ma'am, dear, it's over soon—over soon entirely; and I've had many a drame about it; and I'm as good as sure it is not *that* way luck will come. And what should hinder the young mistress to live all her days as she is now, she that has the handsome fortin, and need want for nothing! Masha, thin, if I were her, I would not look at niver a one of them.' And Biddy went on with her work with redoubled energy, as though sweeping away with the dust suitors and all such follies. However, in spite of her, the winter evenings in my little cottage began now to pass cheerily away. Margaret would again sit and play for hours—always, however, closing with that melody of Beethoven's her father had asked for that last night. She did not very often speak of him, but I knew that he was constantly present to her thoughts; and that even Captain Cameron's hold upon her affections gained additional strength from his having been so decided a favourite of poor Mr Moore's. Of course, I knew how matters would end.

Time went on. Winter passed into spring, and the lovers met almost daily; so it was no surprise to me one fine evening in May, after the two had been walking together, to see Margaret come into my room radiant but tearful; and as she threw her arms around my neck, I did not need to ask any further explanation than that she gave me by the broken words, 'My father loved him.'

SOMETHING ABOUT CLOCKS.

The desire to know the time of day seems to be as inherent in human nature as the desire to know other people's business; and could the thing be done with equal facility, there is little doubt but that that large, benevolent, and public-spirited class of individuals who take so much pleasure in regulating their neighbours' characters and affairs, would find equal pleasure in regulating their clocks and watches; displaying the same praiseworthy ingenuity in finding a screw loose in the one as in the other. Consequently we find that in all ages and in all countries of the world, mankind has made persevering efforts to possess himself of something which should enable him to form some idea as to how 'the enemy'—as old Father Time is profanely called—is progressing.

In these days when electrical clocks in our large towns beat tick for tick with the great 'regulator' at Greenwich—which is as much as to say that their unerring fingers keep pace second by second, minute by minute, and hour by hour, with that mighty time-keeper, the earth, in its axial rotation—when every man prides himself upon his own infallible 'ticker,' and when angry husbands from 'the city,' finding dinner fifteen minutes late, settle all disputes as to time by an appeal to their watches, 'set that very day by the government time-ball in the Strand,' we can form no conception of the troubles and perplexities of our forefathers in their crude attempts to 'tell the creeping hours as they passed.'

Ages probably before the invention of the sun-dial, as we now know it, its prototype, the gnomon, had been set up on the plains of the east by those primitive astronomers, the Chaldean shepherds, who determined, with all the precision of which that first rude astronomical instrument was capable, the length of the day and of the year, and the position of the equinoxes and the solstices.

The first machines, however, for measuring time, of which we have any distinct and certain record, were the *clepsydras*, or water-clocks. Of the precise form in which they were made, we are ignorant; but we know that they all depended upon one principle—

namely, the dropping of water through an orifice of determinate size, the fall of the water indicating the time which had elapsed. They must have been extremely imperfect, inasmuch as the rate at which the water dropped would be liable to constant variation from its constantly varying height and pressure. The *clepsydra* was most probably a Grecian invention, and was introduced into Rome during the consulship of Pompey. In the latter place, it was used in a manner which might not unfrequently have its advantage in our own day. It would appear that the orators in their courts of justice were limited to a certain time for the delivery of their addresses, which time was indicated by the *clepsydra*; hence the expression of Cicero, 'latrare ad clepsydram'—a mode of literally throwing cold water upon a speaker which could not fail of being appreciated by the audience.

After the *clepsydra* came the hour-glass, a clumsy enough method of measuring time, which has, nevertheless, become the conventional symbol of its passing away.

Clocks, consisting of trains of wheels and weights, were probably not invented until the end of the twelfth century; they were almost invariably termed *horologia*. For a very long time, however, they continued very scarce, very expensive, and very imperfect, and were almost entirely confined to the monasteries and some few cathedrals. Why the monasteries should have had a monopoly of them, it is hard to say, unless, indeed, they used them in the same moralising spirit as the philosophical individual encountered by the 'melancholy Jaques' in the forest of Arden—and who is very unjustly designated fool—who

Drew a dial from his poke,
And, looking on it with lacklustre eye,
Says, very wisely: 'It is ten o'clock;
Thus may we see,' quoth he, 'how the world wags:
'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine;
And after an hour more, 't will be eleven;
And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,
And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot;
And thereby hangs a tale!'

That these *horologia*, however, were used for other and more active purposes than pointing a moral upon the flight of time, we learn from a certain book called *Primaria Instituta Canonicorum Premonstratensium*, in which—if any of our readers are curious enough to consult it, which is hardly likely—they will find in the 909th page, and in the best monkish Latin, full directions to the sacristan to regulate the *horologium*, and make it strike before matins, to arouse the sleepy brothers to prayers. Strange to say, however, this *horologium* displayed wonderful alacrity in getting out of order, especially when the mornings were unusually cold, and the chapel unusually damp—cold and damp, it would appear, being inimical to the accurate performance of the *horologium* in those days. We read, however, of one enthusiastic monk, Peter Damiani by name, who had a method of measuring time peculiar to himself, for we are told that he 'had a custom of singing to himself whenever he wished to have a notion as to the quantity of time; that whenever the brightness of the sun or the position of the stars was obscured by the weather, he might form a certain time-measurer by the quantity of psalmody he had accomplished.'

Striking clocks must, we know, have been in use as early as the latter portion of the thirteenth century, for we find that Dante, who died in 1321, aged fifty-seven, makes allusion to them in his *Paradiso*. The earliest clock, of the construction of which we have positive information, was the great clock made for the palace of Charles V. in Paris, by De Vick, a German; the Germans, by the way, seeming to have

taken kindly to clock-making from the earliest times. In Dover Castle there is one still in existence, bearing the date 1348, and which, therefore, in point of antiquity, takes precedence of the more celebrated clock of De Vick. According to Blackstone and Sir Edward Coke, however, a clock was constructed in England at a much earlier date—in the sixteenth year of the reign of Edward I., or about the year 1288. This clock is remarkable from having been constructed out of a fine of 800 marks, imposed by the king upon the chief-justice of the King's Bench, and was appropriately erected upon the law-courts of Westminster Hall, where for generations afterwards its strokes rung out a warning against all future malpractices. Upon its dial was written the appropriate inscription, 'Discite justitiam moniti,' which may be seen to this day by the curious upon a sun-dial now facing the same Westminster Hall.

There can be little doubt, however, that for a long time after the invention of clocks and watches—for the latter followed close upon the heels of the former—they were extremely imperfect, and of very little real value. They ought, in fact, to be regarded more as costly toys, than as really useful contrivances for measuring time. Up to the time of Shakspeare, at anyrate, they must have been very imperfect instruments indeed, for do we not find him making that 'merry mad-cap lord,' Biron, in *Lover's Labour's Lost*, profanely institute a comparison between the women and the clocks of his day :

And I, forsooth, in love? I, that have been
love's whip;
A domineering pedant o'er the boy;
What? I! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!
A woman, that is like a German clock,
Still a-repairing; ever out of frame;
And never going aright—being a *watch*,
But being watched that it may still go right!

We trust the ladies will be induced to pardon the above highly reprehensible sentiments, when we remind them that they were uttered by one who had passed his life in railing at love; who owns himself to have been 'a very beadle to a humorous sigh'; and who at last, by an act of retributive justice, finds himself pierced through and through—in short, 'quite vanquished'—by the soft glances of the gentle Rosaline! Could my lord, however, have lived to the present time, he would have found a wonderful reformation in clocks and watches—that the comparison now would really be a compliment, and a just one—and, excepting an occasional disposition to go too much upon tick, and to strike when they ought not, he would have found that the one could be as true and as constant as the other, and stand as little in need of regulating.

There was one thing, however, which was wanting in all clocks made up to this period, without which they could be of very little real service—namely, *the pendulum*. The origin of its invention is well known: the great Galileo, happening one day to be in a church at Pisa, was struck with the isochronous vibrations of a chandelier, suspended by a long chain from the roof, and immediately conceived the idea of employing the pendulum as regulator for clocks. By this *isochronism* of the pendulum is meant that peculiar property or disposition which it possesses to vibrate arcs of different lengths, provided that none of them be large, in the same space of time. It is this property which gives to the pendulum its peculiar value, and is a result of the well-known law of gravitation.

Although Galileo was undoubtedly the first to perceive the isochronism of the pendulum, Huygens previously investigated its properties mathematically, and published to the world the valuable results

of his investigations; and we are further inclined to believe, although there are several claimants for this honour, that he was also the first to apply the pendulum to regulate the motion of a clock-train.

The degree of accuracy with which clocks and chronometers are now made to perform is something marvellous. In Queen Elizabeth's time, a watch, which, by the way, was about the size of a dessert plate, would seldom go for more than a few hours, and that only after a fashion of its own. When, about the sixteenth century, Philip of Spain offered a reward of 100,000 crowns for a chronometer which should go sufficiently well to enable navigators to determine the longitude at sea, we find Morin, in speaking of it to Cardinal Richelieu, saying: 'I know not what such an undertaking would be even to the devil himself, but to man it would undoubtedly be the height of folly!' Now, it is by no means an uncommon thing for a chronometer to go for months without an error of more than a second, whilst the performance of our best astronomical clocks surpasses even this wonderful precision. The perfection to which chronometers are now brought makes them extremely valuable to navigators for discovering the longitude at sea—a problem the correct solution of which is absolutely essential to the safety of our sailors, the supremacy of our navy, and the stability of our commerce. Longitude is simply a difference in time between one place and another, caused by a corresponding difference of position on the earth's surface. When, therefore, the captain of a vessel departs upon a long voyage, he takes with him a chronometer, whose error and rate of variation have been tested, shewing Greenwich time. If, therefore, at any time he wishes to ascertain his longitude, or, in other words, his position east or west of the first meridian, all he has to do is to compare his chronometer, shewing Greenwich time, with the local time, and the difference between the two tells him exactly where he is. As, however, accidents may happen to the best regulated chronometers, he must have it in his power to test and correct them by a standard which is *infallible*. To do this, he consults a time-keeper of a grander character, of which the spacious firmament of heaven is the dial; those distant orbs of light, the fixed stars, the figures; and our attendant satellite, the moon, both the hour and minute hand. As with steady, unflagging pace she sweeps across that mighty dial, he is enabled, by a simple observation with his quadrant, and a reference to his nautical almanac, to ascertain his exact position, and to test the truth of his chronometer. The tables prepared for his use to enable him to do this are the result of the most painstaking and persevering investigations of the works of nature, involving the consideration and elucidation of some of the most abstruse problems of astronomy. Every 'bright particular star' stationed along the moon's path must be mapped down with the utmost precision, the exact instant, to the fraction of a second, at which they will be occulted by the moon as seen from the meridian of Greenwich, and from every degree east and west of that meridian round the earth, must be accurately calculated and noted down; and all this must be done that the mariner may know exactly the *time* it would be at that moment were he at home, and the time it is with him at the same moment wherever upon the great world of waters he may happen to be floating, that, by a comparison between the two—conjointly with his latitude, which he finds by an easier process still—he may know precisely *where he is*; no matter whether he be rounding the 'Cape of Storms,' or riding over the crested billows of the Atlantic, he may then pursue his undeviating track across the treacherous deep with the same certainty and security as though he felt

beneath his feet the firm foundations of the earth itself. Let no one, then, presume to sneer at or undervalue the patient labours, the abstruse investigations of those great minds who have devoted their lives and energies to the advancement of science, and who have by their labours conferred incalculable benefits upon mankind; and let those who are disposed to emulate their example, ever remember, amid the weariness of study, the grandeur and value of the results.

TROLLOPE'S 'WEST INDIES AND SPANISH MAIN.'*

If the reader desires to read an amusing and not uninstructive work, we would recommend him to Mr Anthony Trollope's volume on the West Indies. All will probably not agree with the writer in sundry matters of opinion; some will think that he sometimes speaks rashly, if not flippantly, on matters of grave concern; nevertheless, he has produced a most readable book, which at the very least is eminently suggestive, and may lead to a better understanding on that terribly difficult and controverted subject—the importation of coolie labour.

It was in the early part of the present year that Mr Trollope visited the West Indies and Spanish Main, and we believe his mission was of an official character; but whatever were his professional duties, they are not alluded to, and the volume is made up entirely of matters of general observation. Opening with an account of Jamaica, he presents a graphic picture of the woebegone appearance of the two principal towns—Kingston and Spanish Town. This last-mentioned town, the seat of government, resembles, says he, 'a city of the dead. There are long streets in which no human inhabitant is ever seen. In others, a silent old negro woman may be sitting at an open door, or a child playing, solitary, in the dust.' In the square containing the government offices, 'all the walls are of a dismal dirty yellow; and a stranger cannot but think that the colour is owing to the dreadfully prevailing disease of the country. In this square there are no sounds; men and women never frequent it; nothing enters it but sunbeams! The glare from those walls seems to forbid that men and women should come there. The houses are very low, and when there is any sun in the heavens, it can enter those streets; and in those heavens there is always a burning, broiling sun. But the place is not wholly deserted. There is here the most frightfully hideous race of pigs that ever made a man ashamed to own himself a bacon-eating biped. I have never done much in pigs myself, but I believe that pigly grace consists in plumpness and comparative shortness—in shortness, above all, of the face and nose. The Spanish Town pigs are never plump. They are the very ghosts of swine, consisting entirely of bones and bristles. Their backs are long, their ribs are long, their legs are long, but, above all, their heads and noses are hideously long. These brutes prowl about in the sun, and glare at the unfrequent strangers with their starved eyes, as though doubting themselves whether, by some little exertion, they might not become beasts of prey.'

Having, in this desolate piggish city, visited the governor, the author tries to consume a few hours in

walking about till he could return by railway. 'I moved slowly round the square, and by the time that I had reached an opposite corner, all my clothes were wet through. On I went, however, down one dead street and up another. I saw no one but pigs, and almost envied them their fleshlessness. I turned another corner, and I came upon the square again. That seemed to me the lowest depth of all that fiery Pandemonium, and with a quickened step I passed through but a corner of it. But the sun blazed even fiercer and fiercer. Should I go back and ask for a seat, if it were but on a bench in the government scullery, among the female negroes? Something I must do, or there would soon be an end of me. There must be some inn in the place, if I could only find it. I could not allow myself to perish there, in the middle of Spanish Town, without an effort.' At length he discovers a house of public entertainment, the Wellington Tavern, 'a miserable hole,' where he finds shelter for two hours from that frightfully scorching sun; and so lives to get back to Kingston.

Some of the inns are tolerable. In these resorts, as at the private houses, the household servants are almost all black, and their manners to a stranger very strange—not absolutely uncivil, but easy, free, and patronising to a very absurd degree. We think, however, that Mr Trollope might at any rate have spoken civilly to them, as it appears he did not, according to his own shewing:

" Halloo, old fellow! how about that bath?" I said one morning to a lad who had been commissioned to see a bath filled for me. He was cleaning boots at the time, and went on with his employment sedulously, as though he had heard not a word. But he was over-sedulous, and I saw that he heard me. "I say, how about that bath?" I continued. But he did not move a muscle. "Put down these boots, sir," I said, going up to him, "and go and do as I bid you." "Who you call fellow? You speak to a gentleman gentlemanly, and den he fill the bath." "James," said I, "might I trouble you to leave those boots, and see the bath filled for me?" and I bowed to him. "Es, sir," he answered, returning my bow; "go at once." And so he did, perfectly satisfied. Had he imagined, however, that I was quizzing him, in all probability he would not have gone at all! This anecdote does not speak very highly for our author's politeness, for why not be polite to a negro shoebblack as well as to any one else?

Mr Trollope travelled over a large part of Jamaica, chiefly on horseback, for the roads are in many places totally unfit for wheeled carriages, and often there are no roads at all; rivers also require to be forded, steeps to be climbed, and much rough work of all kinds to be undertaken. The scenery is described to be magnificent, the capabilities of the soil prodigious, the growth of plants and fruits excessively luxuriant. Thrown on the hospitality of the planters, our author received from them all possible kindness, although, in a variety of instances, it could scarce be well afforded. The finest portions of that fine island are said to be in a state of decay. Labour at a price that will give a fair return, is not to be had. Here, we touch on the sore that afflicts this once thriving settlement. The author, to do him justice, regrets neither emancipation nor the withdrawal of a protecting duty on colonial sugar. Both movements were proper and inevitable. 'From that sin of slavery we have cleansed ourselves;' but then comes the difficulty of getting the free labourers to work for wages with that fidelity and regularity—that sacrifice of leisure during crop-time—without which a sugar-estate cannot be advantageously cultivated.

On this delicate subject, one is perplexed with the

* One volume 8vo, Chapman and Hall, London.

variety of opinions; yet we cannot but think that Mr Trollope has hit on one fertile source of disorganisation in the labour-market of Jamaica—the ease with which unoccupied or deserted land may be taken possession of, unchallenged, by the negro population. Freed from control, and with plenty of land for nothing, ‘the negro has had unbounded facility of squatting, and has availed himself of it freely. To recede from civilisation, and become again savage as savage as the laws of the community will permit—has been to his taste. I believe that he would altogether retrograde, if left to himself.’ It is very right that the negro should be free, but if he decline to work after ten o’clock in the morning—if high pay will not bribe him—what is to become of the sugar-grower? ‘No, tankee, massa; me tired now; me no want more money.’ Or perhaps it is: ‘No; workee no more; money no ‘nuff; workee no pay.’ These are the answers which the suppliant planter receives when, at ten o’clock, he begs his negro neighbours to go a second time into the corn-fields, and earn a second shilling—or implores them to work more than four days a week—or solicits them at Christmas-time to put up with a short ten days’ holiday. His canes are ripe, and his mill should be active; or else they are foul with weeds, and the hogheads will be very short if they be not cleansed. He is anxious enough, for all his work depends upon it. But what does the negro care? ‘No; me no more workee now.’

The proper explanation of this alleged disinclination to work, is undoubtedly the power of living without work. We would not dispute the fact, that in too many cases the negro was cheated with deceptive representations as to the value of his labour, and has resented that treatment accordingly; and certainly the negro is quite justified in not being anybody’s servant if he can help it. He can at any moment, with wife and family, march off into the bush—build himself a hut—scratch a few acres—and with pigs, poultry, fruits, and roots in overflowing abundance, live a jolly, easy, do-nothing existence. Did similar circumstances exist in Great Britain, we should have a speedy solution of the difficulties between employer and employed. But, then, it will very naturally be asked, why not prevent this system of squatting?—the land belongs either to the crown or to some private individual. True, but where are you to get an army of white sheriff’s officers to look after this business? There are only fifteen thousand whites in Jamaica altogether, and several hundred thousand negroes; and, above all, there is a raging sun, which renders white physical activity impracticable. In a word, the thing cannot be done, and we may as well give up speaking about it.

Our author, in his half-jocular way, bears somewhat too hard on the negro’s disposition to idleness; nor does he state the case quite fairly when he alludes to the attempts which have been made to see justice done to this unfortunate race. ‘The negro slave was ill-treated—ill-treated, at anyrate, in that he was a slave; and therefore by that reaction which prevails in all human matters, it is now thought necessary to wrap him up in cotton, and put him under a glass case. The wind must not blow on him too roughly, and the rose-leaves on which he sleeps should not be ruffled. He has been a slave; therefore, let him be a Sybarite. His father did an ample share of work; therefore, let the son be made free from his portion in the primeval curse. The friends of the negro, if they do not actually use such arguments, endeavour to carry out such a theory. But one feels that the joke has almost been carried too far, when one is told that it is necessary to protect the labour-market in Jamaica, and save the negro from the dangers of competition. No immigration of labourers into that happy country should be allowed, lest the rate of

wages be lowered, and the unfortunate labourer be made more dependent on his master! But if the unfortunate labourers could be made to work, say four days a week, and on an average eight hours a day, would not that be an advantage? Now, as far as we have been able to judge, no man in England wishes the negro to be exempted from the ordinary obligation to work for his livelihood; and as regards the immigration of coolies, all that is wanted is, that it may be put on a humane and equitable footing; that no deception or cruelty shall be practised; and that the cost of importation shall not fall on the public revenue, to which the negroes themselves are contributors. Leaving these points, however, to the criticism of those who are more competent to deal with them, we return once more to this—that it is useless to expect negroes to work for a moderate hire so long as they are at liberty to squat; and the only remedy, though it may be a slow one, is, to impart a proper value to the lands of the colony by a free and honestly conducted system of imported coolie labour.

That an undue abundance of land is a main cause of the misfortunes of Jamaica planters, seems conclusive from the position of affairs in Barbadoes. Under the operation of precisely the same legislative measures, there is no want of labour in that well-managed and happy island—no cry of poverty, no need for coolies. The reason simply is, that while the whole of the land is appropriated and under cultivation, there is a dense population of negroes who must make their choice, as we do in England, between work and starvation. We are so patriotic as to imagine, that perhaps some slight share of the general prosperity is due to an early and large infusion of Scottish settlers—political exiles—who may have given a sturdy tone to the moral condition of the colonists; but the scarcity of land in proportion to the number of people who live upon it, is unquestionably the principal cause. Mr Trollope expresses the idea in one or two sentences: ‘In Jamaica, Dominica, St Lucia, and Grenada, the negro, when emancipated, could squat and make himself happy; but in Barbadoes there was not an inch for him. When emancipation came, there was no squatting-ground for the poor Barbadian. He had still to work and make sugar—work quite as hard as when he was a slave. He had to do that, or starve; consequently, labour has been abundant in this island, and in this island only; and in all the West Indian troubles it has kept its head above water, and made sugar respectably—not, indeed, shewing much sugar-genius, or going ahead in the way of improvements, but paying twenty shillings in the pound, supporting itself, and earning its bread decently by the sweat of its brow. . . . There is not a rood of waste land in Barbadoes. It certainly is not the country for a gipsey immigration. Indeed, I doubt whether there is even room for a picnic.’

In the course of his rambles, the author visited Guiana, on the mainland of South America, low-lying, and of boundless fertility. Here, he says, in reference to coolie immigration, ‘the bull has been taken by the horns,’ and the colony is pushing on with uncommon spirit. Its success in thus importing Asiatic labourers, whose interests are said to be carefully guarded, he ascribes to the form of government, which, from its partially despotic character, is able to exercise an energy not to be reached by the broad representative system of Jamaica. How far he is correct in this surmise, we are not able to judge. Mr Trollope has evidently no great hope of immediate improvement where the coloured population has much to say in public affairs. The civilisation of the negroes he speaks of as only a kind of plating; and of their habit of imitating the usages of the whites, without regard to consistency, he

offers some amusing anecdotes. With one of these we may conclude our notice.

Being one day in a shoemaker's shop at St Thomas, buying a pair of boots, a negro entered quickly, and in a loud voice said he wanted a pair of pumps. He was a labouring-man fresh from his labour. He had on an old hat—what, in Ireland, men would call a caubeen; he was in his shirt-sleeves, and was barefooted. As the only shopman was looking for my boots, he was not attended to at the moment. "Want a pair of pumps—directerly!" he roared out in a very dictatorial voice. "Sit down for a moment," said the shopman, "and I will attend to you." The man sat down in an odd fashion, holding up his feet from the floor. I looked on in amazement, thinking he was mad. "Give I a bit of carpet!" he screamed out, still holding up his feet, but with much difficulty. "Yes, yes," said the shopman, still searching for the boots. "Give I a bit of carpet directerly!" he again exclaimed. He was half-choked with anger and discomfort. The shopman gave him the carpet. Most men and women will remember that such bits of carpet are common in shoemakers' shops. They are supplied, I believe, in order that they who are delicate should not soil their stockings on the floor. The gentleman in search of the pumps had seen that people of dignity were supplied with such luxuries, and resolved to have his value for his money; but as he had on neither shoes nor stockings, the little bit of carpet was hardly necessary for his material comfort.

AT THE POINT OF DEATH.

MRS MALOONEY lies at the point of death. There is no doubt about it, if the parish doctor is to be credited. The coats of her stomach have frayed away and vanished in filamentous rags. The asthma has pumped all the breath nearly out of her body, and the stethoscope says there is not enough left to last many days longer. Her appetite has entirely deserted her for many a long day, and she is starved, shrivelled, and shrunk to that degree that her poor old body resembles an anatomical specimen more than it does anything else. She asks for nothing, and takes nothing, and nothing in the world interests her any longer. It is all over with Mrs Malooney, so long the general mother of all Alligator Close, in Little St Giles's, London. Like a good Catholic, as she is, the moribund matron has sent for Father Gahagan, and 'made her soul'—the worthy father has administered extreme unction—and surely there is nothing more for the good dame to do now than just to slip quietly out of the world, making as little fuss as may be.

Never believe it! Mother Malooney was never in her life before the object of such profound interest as she is now. All the Alligators are galvanised into compassionate sympathies at the prospect of her assured demise, and extraordinary manifestations are making on all sides, indicative of their common concern; but chiefly at the Pig and Triangle, at the corner of the close. In that popular and odorous hostelry, the shamrock is exhibited in the window rudely involved in bows of black ribbon, among the folds of which is stuck the smallest of visiting-cards inscribed, in a kind of sepulchral-looking print, with the words: 'Mrs Malooney's Meet, Wednesday, June 12, at 9 o'clock precisely;' and below hangs a placard informing the benevolently disposed that 'tickets may be had within.'

This is the first time that the name of the general mother has ever figured in print—barring, as she would say, some few incidental mentions, which may not have been to her discredit, in the newspaper reports of police, or even Old Bailey cases—and these tickets are Mrs Malooney's cards of ceremony, issued

for the first and last time from her death-bed. They will circulate far and wide, these little paper summons; for forty years and more of motherhood in London's densest rookery have made the Malooney a household word, if that term may be applied to a race who, for the most part, have no households—the vagabond and migratory sons and daughters of the Emerald Isle all London over. Thousands of brawny hodmen, who have supped their nightly stew from the Malooney caldron, will recognise the signal, even if they do not respond to it; and any one cognizant of all the circumstances and career of the beldam now in *extremis*, might augur without much risk that there will be a pretty full gathering when the 'meet' comes off.

What is the 'meet' about, do you ask? You had better put the question to the Malooney's daughter, Judith, who keeps the fruit-stall at the corner of Tottenham Court Road. If you should interrogate her in the character of a customer, perhaps you may succeed in eliciting the information which, failing any such application on your part, we will be courteous enough to communicate. Know, then, that Mrs Malooney having made up her mind to die, and no mistake at all about it, United Ireland—in the persons of her friends and patrons, intimates and congeners—have made up their minds, or are to be persuaded to make up their minds, to give her, *more majorum*, a glorious 'wake' between death and burial. The tickets to the 'meet,' you will understand, are to be sold not at any fixed price—if that were the rule, the probability is that very few would find purchasers—but for whatever the friends of the beneficiary, not one-third of whom will make any use of them, will give for them. They will be tendered to every hard-working Hibernian with a heart in his breast and a sixpence in his pocket, and will be readily relinquished for anything in the shape of a coin, but not surrendered gratuitously. The holders of tickets will be admitted to the 'meet,' but not to the drink—which will flow freely enough on that occasion—unless they choose to pay for it.

And now, be pleased to imagine that the 12th of June has dawned, and waned, and deepened into night—that we are standing in Alligator Close, and that the hour of the 'meet' has arrived. If you are provided with a ticket, and do not mind elbowing your way through a mob of united Hibernians in sympathetic mood, you may manage to squeeze in with us, and see for yourself what takes place. There is no apartment in the Pig and Triangle that is half large enough to contain the ticket-holders, and, as a consequence, they are marched, as fast as they enter, through the building into the skittle-ground in the rear, which has been temporarily fitted up with long tables and benches for their accommodation. There, at a trestle placed crosswise at the end of the alley, on the precise spot where the untuneful nine have so often descended ingloriously at the instigation of that huge *lignum-vita* bullet launched at them by the brawny hodmen, sits the rather blowsy Pomona Judith Malooney in the character of chief mourner in *futuro*. There is a doleful expression on her face, and the corners of her mouth gravitate tragically enough; but there is a keen sparkle in her eye at the same time, which glances from side to side as 'the boys' swarm in, betraying a manifest attention to business, and which is not undemonstrative of inward satisfaction. On the board before her are displayed the 'effects' of her as yet undeceased parent, the general mother. These consist of sundry specimens of cracked crockery-ware, a brace of flat-irons, some fathoms of clothes-line, a tin kettle or two, and the great family caldron with its sooty suspending-chain.

The area is nearly choke-full when the proceedings commence; and as these are more characteristic than curious, and might not pleasantly interest the reader

were they chronicled in detail, we shall endeavour to dismiss them with brevity. Notwithstanding that the place is open to the sky, the crowd makes it almost insufferably hot, and there is an unanimous outcry for beer, for the circulation of which the landlord has made laudable provision, by the establishment of a causeway for his pot-laden waiters along the tops of the tables, round the whole enclosure. When the general thirst is a little assuaged, there rises a cry for Mike O'Brien; and after a little coqueting with the popular voice, Mike accordingly makes his appearance, popping up suddenly like a conjuror's jack-in-the-box, just in the rear of the now lachrymose Judith. Mike O'Brien is a natural-born orator and rhetorician, a boy that 'has the larnin,' and knows how to make the most of it; he is clad in seedy black, and shews a vivacious countenance under a shock of dense black hair. He is received with a torrent of welcomes exploded from all sides.

'Woo! wurrat! ye're the boy for a spache anyhow!'

'Whithero! long life to ye, Mike! give 'em a spanker, me jewel!'

'Wishit there, wull ye, and hark to O'Brien, the boy!'

And so on, with variations in the Celtic tongue which we are not qualified to report, amidst a chorus of congratulatory yells and hootings, swelling louder and louder every moment; during which agreeable demonstrations the orator gesticulates rather theatrically—somewhat after the manner of an itinerant professor doing the Statues on the platform of a travelling-stage. At length, taking advantage of a comparative lull, he sweeps the long locks from his forehead, and launching forth his right arm, gives utterance in a voice that would make itself heard amidst the roar of a cataract.

'Gintlemin,' says the O'Brien—'Gintlemin all, ye're makin' a divole of a row, an' it's a question if there's half-a-dozen of ye know what ye're bawlin' about. Shure, I'm not going to reproach ye with that—small blame to you, gintlemin, seeing that such is the natural order of things, and has been, from time immemorial, all over the wurruld. The more the row, the less the knowledge, is a maxim that holds good at the senate and the bar, as well as in the assemblies of the people. But, *moderatio in omnibus est*, as the great poet says; so close the hinges of your maxillaries, and lend me your ears, and, faith, I'll illuminate your benighted intelligences, and tell ye in a twinklin' what has brought ye here.'

There is a low murmur of applause while the orator takes breath after this exordium, and prepares to address himself to the task of explanation. Having informed the assembly of the sad circumstances of the general mother—of the utter hopelessness of her recovery—of her preparation for death, and the administration of extreme unction by the hands of Father Gahagan—he calls upon them to testify their regard for the departing woman by bidding bountifully for the effects to be disposed of, which are now before them, in charge of the about-to-be-orphaned Judith. Delicacy prevents him from adding—what, however, is perfectly well known to every person present—that as the goods to be disposed of will all be put up to raffle, the names of all persons appearing in the several lists, and having against them a certain sum, will also appear in the list of those friends who will be bidden to the wake of the aged Malooney, as soon as, by departing this life, she has rendered that ceremony practicable. 'Remember, boys,' says the orator in conclusion, 'this is the last and only chance ye will have of acknowledging yer obligations to her who will soon be no more. *Pristeritis non possumus revocare*—you can't

call the dead to life again. What you do or don't do now, is done or undone for ever! Close your hands to-day, and if you open them to-morrow full of untold gowld, 'tis too late! Remember that, I tell ye—and now to business.'

With the mention of business, the yelling and hubbub, the clattering of pots and libations of beer, are resumed; and in the midst of a din that would appal a pawnbroker's auctioneer, the ensuing proceedings are despatched with a rapidity more than remarkable. The rusty goods are put up to raffle, Mr O'Brien recording the names of the competitors, and Judith receiving the cash. At first, as fast as a lot is won, it is put up again, the benevolent winner declining to receive it. Judith, who throws the dice for everybody, has enough to do, but amidst all her bewildering occupations, she takes care to pouch the cash as fast as it comes in. By and by, three or four lots are in competition at once, and now Judith, whose pocket is getting well lined, declines to receive them back after the die is cast, and delivers them to their owners. Towards midnight the scene grows wild and half ferocious—the crockery is seen flying about in shivers, the pots, kettles, and flat-irons are swung aloft in brawny arms, and one expects every moment to see them whirled among the throng. Fortunately, the landlord has stopped the supplies of beer; and now a squad of the night-police are seen at the door, and they are doing their best, in a half-jocose but thoroughly determined way, to clear the premises. This is not accomplished in a hurry; but at length, by dint of wheedling, coaxing, threatening, and shouldering, the skittle-ground is evacuated, and Judith accepting the hospitality of the landlord for the night, the doors of the Pig and Triangle are barred against all comers. But for some hours afterwards, Alligator Close is in a state of commotion and uproar. Spike of all the police can do—though they interfere no more than they are obliged to do—there is a rather fierce fight for the effects of the undecceased, the persons who had won them first not being able clearly to recognise the stronger claim of those who had won them last. In the end, the real effects of the 'meet' and the raffle consist far more of broken heads and body bruises than of anything in the shape of goods and chattles; and it is said that such was the recklessness of the benevolent Alligators in that nocturnal shindry, that Judith, on rising in the morning, was enabled to collect, and did collect, all the effects of her bed-ridden mother, barring the broken crockery and the few fathoms of clothes-line.

And now, what words shall we find with which to relate the final *dénouement* and upshot of this veracious history? Verily, we need the vocabulary of Mr O'Brien himself to do it justice; for surely never was there an instance of such depravity placed upon the record as it is our misfortune to chronicle in the case of that old Mother Malooney. But it must be told. Just as the disinterested and benevolent sympathisers of the 'meet' were expecting to be bidden to the wake, came a rumour that Mrs Malooney, instead of deceasing decently, as she ought to have done, had one morning sat up in bed, and called loudly for a noggan of gin! More than that, she had actually lighted her short pipe, her dear dudene, and after a few whiffs, had begun clouraming for stout; and when Father Gahagan came to see how she was going off, she had sent him away with a flea in his ear, and finally, to cut the matter short, had refused to cease at all. Here was a scandalous affair! Who shall depict the indignation and disgust of the Alligators at this unprincipled and atrocious swindle? They all felt themselves shamefully treated, and gave vociferous vent to their abuse of the old beldam who had so egregiously taken them in—and who, worse still, had humbugged the priest by

wickedly refusing to take herself off, as in duty bound, after ‘resaving the blessed unction.’ Meanwhile, the old dame got better and grew stronger in the precise ratio of the scorn and contempt her convalescence excited. When she got about again, however, as she did before August, she discovered that Alligator Close was, alas! no longer a home for her, and that she must seek some other locality in which to suspend her hospitable caldron. Lucky for her, life had its compensations. The proceeds of the ‘meet’ amounted to a comfortable little sum, and since she has been pushed away, as it were, from the shelter of the grave, it was fortunate at least that she had something to fall back upon. With her daughter Judith she has withdrawn from the home of the Alligators, and awaits, on a more peaceful shore, the moment when she shall be called upon to fulfil what, not without a sentiment of compunction for her involuntary offence, she conceives to be her covenant with Father Gahagan.

NEW YORK TO LONDON IN 48 HOURS!

EXACTLY three-quarters of a century ago, an Italian, named Lunardi, who had come over to this country, was ridiculed in the London newspapers and coffee-houses—for no other reason than that he proposed to sail through the air in a balloon. Several ascents had been previously made indeed, and with success, but they had occurred in France, and therefore did not particularly recommend Lunardi to the favourable consideration of the French-despising and unbelieving inhabitants of the British Isles. He was looked upon as an impostor; and the immense crowd, including the Prince of Wales (afterwards George IV.), which assembled in the Artillery Ground, Moorfields, on September 15, 1784, to witness him make the first ascent that had been made in Britain, were animated by anything but friendly feelings towards him. It was intended that another gentleman should accompany Lunardi on his trip, but it was discovered, at the last moment, that the balloon was not sufficiently buoyant to take up so great a weight. This fact tended to increase the hostile disposition of the audience. A new and smaller gallery had to be substituted, and this was scarcely completed when it was announced to Lunardi that an accident had happened to the balloon which would prevent his aerial voyage. In face of the incredulous and hostile mob, this intimation, according to Lunardi’s own account, ‘almost deprived him of his senses;’ and though he instantly found that the injury was trifling, he was so alarmed, that he forgot to take his instruments for observation along with him. ‘I threw myself into the gallery,’ says he, ‘determined to hazard no further accidents that might consign me and the balloon to the fury of the populace, which I saw on the point of bursting.’ The ropes were cut, and the balloon slowly and majestically rose with the adventurous aéronaut, in the sight, and amid the plaudits of all the people, who were now ten times more enthusiastic than they had been adverse before. The ascent was a most successful one. After a voyage of two hours and a quarter, M. Lunardi landed in a field in Hertfordshire, among a crowd of rustics, who at first refused to yield any assistance to one who came on what they called ‘the devil’s horse.’ On the spot where Lunardi alighted, a country gentleman erected a stone with this curious inscription: ‘Let posterity know, and knowing, be astonished, that on the 15th day of September 1784, Vincent Lunardi, of Lucca, in Tuscany, the first aerial traveller in Britain, mounting from the Artillery Ground in

London, and traversing the regions of the air for two hours and fifteen minutes, in this spot revisited the earth. On this rude monument for ages be recorded that wondrous enterprise, successfully achieved by the powers of chemistry and the fortitude of man; that improvement in science which the Great Author of all knowledge, patronising by His providence the inventions of mankind, hath graciously permitted, to their benefit and His own eternal glory.’

Lunardi now became quite a hero; and next year, when he visited Edinburgh, he was presented with the freedom of the city, and was also made a burgess of several other Scotch towns. The balloon in which Lunardi made his ascents is described as of pear-shape, ‘30 feet high, and 23 broad, and made of silk of different colours.’

The incredulity, the alarm, the astonishment, and enthusiasm alternately excited by these first attempts at aérostation amongst us, are feelings of the past; and we are now disposed to wonder how they could ever have existed. Immense improvements have taken place in balloons and ballooning since that period, but none of the many practical benefits which were predicted, after people had got over their first apprehension and amazement, have resulted therefrom. The great drawback to balloon-transit is, of course, the difficulties of regulating the ascents and descents, and of directing the course of the machine to any desired place; and there is a growing belief in the public mind, that these difficulties are insurmountable. Recent experiments in America, however, would seem to point to the possibility of systematic and useful aerial navigation; and we have recalled the account of the first balloon ascent in Great Britain, in order that it may contrast with the latest and most gigantic undertaking in this way—that of Mr Lowe, of New York, who promises to cross the Atlantic Ocean in two days, or at most, two and three-quarters; and also to indicate how much education tends to deprive us of the capability of astonishment. We often hear of the credulity of ignorance, but far more credulous is knowledge. For one who believed in the possibility of the very easyfeat of M. Lunardi, twenty will now have faith in the extremely difficult project of Mr Lowe; and were he to accomplish it successfully to-morrow, scarcely any one would be amazed; certainly no such stone would mark the place of his descent as that which commemorates the two hours’ trip of Lunardi.

Eight months ago, we learn from the American papers, Mr Lowe, an experienced aéronaut, commenced the construction of an aerial ship—which is, in fact, an immense balloon—to carry him across the Atlantic. The greatest circumference of the balloon is 387 feet; and it is computed that it will hold no less than 700,000 cubic feet of gas—five times more than the most capacious balloon ever before constructed. More than 6000 yards of double-twisted muslin have been used in the formation of this gas-holder—the top part, where most resistance is required, being composed of three thicknesses of the material, which has been, as far as possible, rendered impervious to gas and rain alike, by several coats of varnish. The balloon will be protected in the usual way by netting, strengthened, of course, in proportion to the size of the globe. From it, as in the case of ordinary balloons, will depend the car, and beneath that again, the life-boat. More than fifteen miles of cord have been used in the netting, which weighs 325 pounds. Fifteen feet below the ‘concentrating hoop,’ to which the netting is made fast, hangs the passenger-car. It is circular in form, and has a circumference of 20 feet, with a depth of 4 feet. Curtains, in which are glass windows, descend from the hoop, and fasten on tight to the edge of the car all round; and as a further protection against cold, and for certain subsidiary

cooking purposes, a stove, in which heat is generated by the slaking of lime, has been provided. The life-boat, which is suspended 20 feet beneath, is communicated with through a trap-door in the bottom of the car by means of a substantial ladder. The boat is 30 feet long, 7 feet broad, and 4 feet deep. In this boat is fixed an apparatus, the invention of Mr Lowe, which he asserts will enable him to elevate and depress the machine at pleasure, without the slightest expenditure of either gas or ballast. He will thus, if the plan bears out its promise, be enabled to take advantage of favouring, and to avoid contrary currents. The apparatus is somewhat similar in character to a winnowing fan, and it is anticipated that it will also obviate the rotatory motion hitherto characteristic of balloons. It is driven by an Ericsson caloric engine of four-horse power, which is also adapted to turn the paddle-wheels affixed to the boat, in case the aéronauts have to take to the water—a possibility not to be unanticipated. The boat is also fitted with masts and sails, nautical instruments, and all other equipments necessary for a marine voyage. As a further means of obviating the expenditure, or waste of gas, Mr Lowe has provided himself with two large copper vessels, weighing, respectively, 100 pounds and 200 pounds. These are to be filled with condensed gas, and connected by a pipe with the great globe. Any loss of gas by leakage will be supplied from these vessels by a force-pump, and by the same method, gas can be abstracted from the balloon, when it attains too great a height, and forced into the condensers. These vessels will also serve another purpose. Supposing the balloon to be depressed by the effect of rain or other influence, one of them, to which will be attached a rope of considerable length, can be thrown overboard into the sea, where it will float. The balloon will be at once relieved, and will rise to the full extent of its tether, at which height it will sail along until it attains sufficient buoyancy to lift the condenser, which will then be pulled up again into the machine. This part of the invention does not seem very feasible. The difficulty of raising such a weight to any great height could, we think, only be overcome by mechanical appliances, of which there is no mention. This by the way, however, our object just now being to describe, not to discuss. Another invention of Mr Lowe's is a sounding-line. Weighted at the end, this line will depend from the car a mile or more; and ribbons attached to it, at various distances, will shew the direction of currents. These, with one or two anchors of peculiar construction, barometers, compasses, &c., complete the equipment of the new airship, *The City of New York*, which is to make the passage from New York to England in forty-eight hours, or, at the very utmost, sixty-four. 'The whole apparatus,' says a New York paper of the 24th September, 'will be completed in a few days, and will be ready to start as soon as the weather shall have become settled after the equinoctial storm.' The balloon with its appurtenances weighs $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons, and its lifting capacity will be equal to about 22½ tons, its total cost being about 22,000 dollars. The crew is to consist of eight persons, grandiloquently described in the American papers as 'the aéronaut, four scientific sea-navigators, two scientific landsmen, and the historian!' Fabulous sums have been offered by some Americans for the privilege of coming over in the aerial vessel, but on no condition are passengers to be carried on the experimental trip.

That balloons are capable of a speed even greater than that required to cross the Atlantic in the shortest time mentioned by Mr Lowe, has been made manifest by a voyage in America, by Mr La Mountain, on the 22d of last September, when a distance of about 300 miles was accomplished in 4 hours. This gives a

rate of 75 miles per hour; and as it is somewhat less than 3000 miles from New York to Britain, it follows that a uniform rate of speed in a direct course would bridge the intervening ocean in 40 hours. Can this direct route be taken? Can the aid of favouring breezes, to insure continuously so great a speed, be secured? These are questions which Mr Lowe has yet to answer.

But if the result of the experiment be as anticipated, the *Great Eastern* must hide her diminished (figure) head.

THE STRAY SUNBEAM.

A SUNBEAM stole from behind a cloud,
And glanced in gay mood o'er the valley below,
It joined in the mirth of the revelling crowd,
And played in the chamber where life ebbed slow.

Wherever it came, it was welcome to all—
To the smiling cheek it imparted a grace;
It gilded the prison, the cottage, the hall,
It brought a warm glow to the sick man's face.

'Welcome to all,' did I say? But, hold!
There were places and persons that greeted it not:
A miser was counting his hordes of gold;
A red-faced housewife had put on the pot;

A thief had his hand in an honest man's fob;
An owl was about to swoop on its prey—
For each and for all it proved a bad job,
And all owing, too, to that mischievous ray.

For his own shadow frightened the miser so much,
That he raised a loud cry, and made known his great
riches;
And his own shadow foiled the pickpocket's fine touch,

So the watch remained safe in old Allworthy's
breeches;

The pot was beginning to bubble and simmer,
When the Sunbeam crept softly, and puffed out the
flame;

The owl was obliged to wait till it grew dimmer,
And cursed—while the mouse blessed—his stars for
that same.

'Well, come,' said the beam, 'now I've had my diversion,
Not agreeable to all is fair weather, I find;
One hails me with joy, I'm another's aversion,
For sunshine and shadow are things of the mind.'

On Saturday, the 7th of January 1860, will be commenced
in this Journal,

A STORY, entitled

THE BATEMAN HOUSEHOLD, AND WHAT BECAME OF THEM.

BY JAMES PAYN,
AUTHOR OF 'STORIES AND SKETCHES,' &c. &c.
To be continued every week until completed.

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